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August 4, 1997

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Department of Energy Fernald Contractor Fined for Inspection Failures

The Department of Energy assessed the operator of its Fernald Environmental Management Project near Cincinnati, Ohio, \$10,000 for repeatedly failing to complete effective corrective actions regarding inspection of nuclear material storage containers. The non-reimbursable fine was assessed to Fluor Daniel Fernald Corporation for violating provisions of nuclear safety rules issued under the Price Anderson Amendments Act of 1988.

"Appropriate, effective and timely corrective action is critical in preventing serious accidents at our facilities," said Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary for Environment Safety and Health Peter Brush. "The fine is appropriate in this case because of the repeated failures to correct the problems."

The barrels, which contain low-level radioactive material including uranium oxide and uranium tetrafluoride, require inspection to ensure structural integrity, and to provide early detection of deterioration to prevent leakage of the radioactive waste. Although no containers were found to be leaking, the department determined that the inspections were not being performed properly to ensure the long term condition of the containers. Despite the contractor's assurances that effective corrective actions had been carried out, the Energy Department found that violations such as proper documentation and inadequate inspector training continued to occur.

The violations associated with these problems were classified at Severity Level III, which is the lowest level violation issued by the department. The department does not normally issue civil penalties in such cases. In addition to payment of the fine, FDF is required to document specific actions taken or planned to prevent recurrence. The Energy Department will subsequently determine whether further action is necessary.

Copies of materials related to this Enforcement Action are available on the Internet at

<http://tis-nt.eh.doe.gov/enforce/>.

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L-97-028



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Updated: 11/01/97